

# 1 Peter 1:6-7

## Heaviness and Heaven

### Review of 1 Peter:

The Epistle of First Peter was written to encourage and strengthen the Jewish believers scattered throughout the northeastern part of Asia Minor, areas now called *Turkey*.

Peter wrote early on the subject of joy and the believer because his readers needed the reminder and the encouragement as they faced severe persecution.

### A useful outline

Salutation (1:1-2)

I. Suffering Christians Should Remember Their Great Salvation (1:3–2:10)

A. The Certainty of Their Salvation (1:3-12)

1. It is preserved by the power of God (1:3-5)
2. It is proven by the trials from God (1:6-9)
3. It was predicted by the prophets of God (1:10-12)

v. 6 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice*

*Spurgeon:* This paradox has been known and felt by many of the Lord's children, and it is far from being the greatest paradox of the Christian life. Of all riddles, the greatest riddle is a Christian man. What wonder, then, beloved, if the Christian man be a paradox himself, that his condition should be a paradox too!

*JP:* Christianity is a life of painful joy. The Old Testament commands us to delight ourselves in the Lord (Psalm 37:4) and to serve the Lord with gladness (Psalm 100:2) and to rejoice before the Lord our God in all our undertakings (Deuteronomy 12:18).

And so it is with the other writers of Scripture. The message is: Christianity is a life of tremendous and abiding joy.

Now Peter picks up this great theme in verse six and shows us two great reasons for joy, and in the process, why it is painful joy.

### Four sides of the trials God uses to prove believer's faith:

I. v.6 First, he declares that their temptations are...*now for a season...*

**Season:** puny (in extent, degree, number, duration or value); *somewhat*: - brief [-ly], few, (a) little, + long, a season, short, small, a while.

II. v.6 Second, trials come...*if need be...*

That is, when they serve a purpose in believers' lives. God uses troubles to humble believers (Deut. 8:3; 2 Cor. 12:7-10), wean them away from worldly things and point them toward heaven (John 16:33; Rev. 14:13; cf. Job 19:25-26), teach them to value God's blessing as opposed to life's pain (1 Peter 4:13; Rom. 8:17-18), enable them to help others (2 Cor. 1:3-7; Heb. 13:3), chasten them for their sins (1 Cor. 11:30; cf. Job 5:17; Luke 15:16-18; Heb. 12:5-12), and to help strengthen spiritual character (Rom. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:4-6; James 1:2-4; 5:11).

III. v.6 Third, Peter with the term...*ye are in heaviness...* acknowledges that trouble definitely brings some pain.

**Heaviness:** to distress; to be sad: - cause grief, grieve, (be) sorrow (-ful), be (make) sorry. Refers not only to physical pain, but also to mental anguish, including sadness, sorrow, disappointment, and anxiety. By God's design, trouble needs to be painful in order to refine believers for greater spiritual usefulness.

*JP:* In God's design for our trials there is a place for real, authentic grieving and distress. But this experience is fundamentally altered from the way the world experiences these things. We see a design in it all.

### **Reasons for the Christian's heaviness [Spurgeon]:**

- A. In the first place, **if we were not in heaviness during our troubles we should not be like our Covenant Head — Christ Jesus.**
- B. Yet again; if the Christian did not sometimes suffer heaviness **he would begin to grow too proud**, and think too much of himself, and become too great in his own esteem.
- C. Another reason for this discipline is, I think, that in heaviness **we often learn lessons that we never could attain elsewhere.**
- D. And yet again; this heaviness is of essential use to a Christian, **if he would do good to others.** Those who have been in the chamber of affliction know how to comfort those who are there.

**IV. v.6** Fourth, the apostle notes in verse 6 that Christians experience...*manifold temptations*...

**Manifold:** various in character: - divers, manifold.

**Temptations:** a putting to proof (by experiment [of good], discipline or provocation); by implication adversity: - temptation, X try.

*JP:* The point is that the variety of ways that we experience distress is great. So in God's design it is "need [-ed]," he says, to use a wide range of trials. There is not just one kind of trial in view here. God paints with many colors.

This perspective on trouble not only does not diminish joy but actually produces triumphant joy, since the experience validates Christians' faith.

### **v.7 That the trial of your faith...**

**Trial:** a *testing*; by implication *trustworthiness*: - trial, trying.

Robertson's: the *proof of your faith*

**Faith:** *persuasion*, moral conviction (of *religious* truth, or the truthfulness of God), especially *reliance* upon Christ for salvation; *constancy* in such profession; - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

When the gold is ready to be remolded, the impurities have also perished in the flame. Trials and difficulties may assail the life of a believer, but they also have the ability to identify and banish those impurities which might impair growth and service. This is the first of several passages in the epistle which view suffering as essentially fruitful and necessary.

*Mac:* He does this not because He needs to discover who is a true believer, but so that believers will gain joy and confidence in their proven faith.

### **v.7 ...being much more precious...**

**Precious:** valuable, that is, costly, or honored, esteemed, or beloved: - dear, honourable, (more, most) precious, had in reputation.

### **v.7 ...than of gold that perisheth...**

**Gold:** a golden article, that is, gold plating, ornament, or coin: - gold.

**Perisheth:** to destroy fully - destroy, die, lose, mar, perish.

*Mac:* Peter used **gold** in his analogy because it was the most precious and highly prized of all metals.

Just as **fire** separates gold from useless dross, so God uses suffering and trials to separate true faith from superficial profession. But even though gold can be purified when **tried/tested by fire**, it is **perishable** (cf. James 5:3). However, proven faith is eternal, making it **more precious than gold**.

### **v.7 ...though it be tried with fire...**

**Tried:** to *test*; by implication *to approve*: - allow, discern, examine, (ap-) prove, try.

**Fire:** "fire" (literally or figuratively, specifically lightning): - fiery, fire.

*JP:* These impurities in our faith hinder our fullest experience of the goodness and greatness of God. So God designs to refine our faith with the fires of trial and distress. His aim is that our faith be more pure and more genuine. That is, that it be more utterly dependent on him and not on things and other persons for our joy.

**v.7 ... might be found unto praise and honour and glory...**

**Might be found:** find, get, obtain, perceive, see.

**Praise:** laudation; concretely a commendable thing: - praise.

**Honor:** a value, that is, money paid or the dignity itself: - honour, precious, price

*Mac:* Honor likely refers to the rewards God will give to believers because of their service to Him. Paul explains this in more detail in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

**Glory:** dignity, glory (-ious), honour, praise, worship.

**v.7 ...at the appearing of Jesus Christ:**

**Appearing:** disclosure: - appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation.

*Mac:* None of these passages, however, indicate that believers have to wait until Christ's return before He finds their faith genuine. The reality of their faith is already validated by their faithful enduring of trials and testings. It is an amazing truth that when Jesus returns for His own, not only will they joyfully serve Him, but also He will graciously serve and honor them.

### **So What???**

Do you possess this great salvation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you rejoicing in the great salvation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you recognize your trials as refining your faith?

Are you submitting to the Refiner's fire?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you counting on Christ's reward to satisfy the heaviness of your trials?

Are you looking for Christ's appearing?

☐ Yes

☐ No